

Minutes of The Bishop Auckland Stronger Towns Board Meeting

Friday 11th September, 12.30 – 14.30, Microsoft Teams

Attendees:		
David Land (Chair)	DL	Chair
Jonathan Ruffer	JR	The Auckland Project, Founder
Susie Doyle	SD	The Auckland Project, Head of Development
Rob Yorke	RY	Private Sector Representative - Teescraft
Cllr Brian Stephens	BS	Portfolio Lead for Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships
Paul Robson	PR	
Graham Wood	GW	Economic Development Manager, DCC
Natalie Davison-Terranova	ND-T	Principal/Chief Executive - Bishop Auckland College
Amy Harhoff	AH	Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth, DCC
Mike Matthews	MM	Private Sector Member
Cllr Shirley Quinn	SQ	Councillor
Cllr Joy Allen	JA	Councillor
Jonathan Gilroy	JG	Cities and Local Growth Team
Graeme Collinge	GC	Director, Genecon
Helen Golightly	HG	Executive Director, North East LEP

Apologies:		
David Maddan	DM	The Auckland Project, Chief Executive Officer
Liz Fisher	LF	The Auckland Project, Engagement and Curatorial Director
Bishop Paul Butler	PB	Chair of the Brighter BA Partnership Board
Dehenna Davidson	DD	MP for Bishop Auckland

Item		Action
1.0	Welcome/Introductions	
1.1	N/A	
2.0	Review of Previous Minutes	
2.1	No Comments.	
3.0	Declarations of Interest – if any	
3.1	N/A	

4.0	Quick Wins Update	
4.1	GW confirms to the Board that the projects agreed in the previous meeting for Quick Wins funding have now been submitted. Upon receipt of the notification letter it will be a fairly rapid process to completion. GW confirms that the projects are ready to go when required.	
5.0	Working Group Activity & Feedback	
5.1	Planning and Enterprise Working Group	
5.1.1	RY provided an update on progress of the Planning and Enterprise working group. The area of Bishop Auckland has been reviewed and split into zones. The group is now working up proposals for what the town needs to serve its community and visitors, without conflicting or duplicating what it already has to offer.	
5.1.2	Eastern Access Road and parking to town periphery are considered high priority projects for traffic relief.	
5.1.3	The southern end of the town has been proposed as the youth culture quarter with a focus on bars, cafes, restaurants and entertainment.	
5.1.4	GC encourages thinking around outcomes and objectives as per the framework structure, as well as identifying potential projects. GC happy to attend future working groups to support. RY to issue invitation.	RY
5.1.5	AH suggests Stuart Timmiss - Head of Housing and Planning also attends this working group to support.	
5.1.6	RY queries if DCC can provide any further insight into plans for the former Beales Store on Newgate Street. GW confirms that the proposal for flats is a rumour and the opportunity for it to become a hotel is open and ongoing.	
5.1.7	JA notes that the LEP are looking to support groups with funding to develop business cases for strategic projects and queries if the Board will we be tapping into this. DL confirms yes. HG to notify Board when this funding becomes available.	HG
5.1.8	GW to arrange a workshop for Tuesday 22 nd 2020 for the thematic leads to come together and consider underlying/cross cutting issues such as sustainability, transport and connectivity. This will ensure that ideas emerging from individual groups are nipped together.	GW

5.2	Skills & Infrastructure Working Group	
5.2.1	ND-T notes that in terms of attendees the working group is struggling to get engagement from Job Centre Plus. ND-T to contact PR.	ND-T
5.2.2	The working group intends to organise/generate project ideas around the following objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address the issue of increasing NEET levels among young people. - Initiatives to address adult unemployment. Preparing people who have been made redundant for other employment. - Start-up business training – enterprise support - Support for existing businesses – drive towards ecommerce business models - Address sector specific skills training needs 	
5.2.3	JA notes that it is essential we encourage hope and support opportunities for career change following widespread redundancies as a result of Covid-19. AH concurs that a key theme is recovery and our offer needs to address the challenges.	
5.2.4	MM notes that digitalisation is moving at pace and affecting businesses. Digital skills should be considered key for young people.	
5.2.5	MM and ND-T to issue GC invitation to join their respective working group meetings.	MM/ND-T
6.0	Update on Vision Statement	
6.1	GW confirmed that the agreed list of key phrases is due to be pulled together into a coherent vision statement with two to three straplines underneath. GC reinforces the importance of the straplines.	
7.0	Update from Genecon re TIP Process	
7.1	GC confirmed that he has shared a structure for the TIP document with DL and GW this morning. GW to circulate.	GW
7.2	The first stage of the process is to write a 10,000-word narrative that takes explains the baseline evidence, the vision and themes, how we arrived at our project list and how it was prioritised down to the set of projects put forward in the Town Deal. Part two of the submission will be to work up the detail of each individual project with proformas, similar to those used in the Future High Streets bid.	

7.3	Useful feedback has been provided by MHGLC regarding the first cohort of TIP bid submissions. DL to circulate to wider group. Key is ensuring the core challenges and objectives are defined under each theme.	DL
7.4	Clean growth and the challenges presented by Covid-19 are key areas to address.	
7.5	GW confirms that out Town Fund Coordinator has changed from Lisa Quinn to Kim Cooper. Kim Cooper has stressed that from her point of view it is important that there the local identity is kept apparent throughout the TIP. Board to be mindful of this.	
7.6	Query put to DCC regarding the appetite from developers in exploring opportunities in Bishop Auckland. GW confirms that appetite is considered low at the moment but confirms the profile of the area is growing with the existing and proposed investment plans. Economic stabilisation will likely encourage more interest.	
8.0	Plans for Consultation Activity	
8.1	GW provided a verbal update on plans for consultation activity, a paper will follow to a future Board Meeting. Aspirations within the work plan are that once we have a package of potential projects for the TIP, we will commence consultation. In the current climate, it is likely that this will be virtual – GW is discussing with Ryder on how best to facilitate this.	
8.2	Noted that Arup have confirmed it would be appropriate to reflect upon and include some of the past consultation work done in the area.	
8.3	DL notes that highlighting the project deliverables is important within the consultation process. CGI/promotional video will be key in communicating the vision.	
9.0	Board Work Plan	
9.1	As per paper circulated, GW comments that he has highlighted emerging key decisions required in forthcoming Board Meetings.	GW
9.2	DL comments that the Work Plan spreadsheet should be amended with more realistic dates so that it becomes a workable document rather than theoretical. GW to action.	
10.0	AOB	
10.1	Board agrees that a final decision on CGI is required. GW to discuss with AH regarding how this is resourced. GW to update Board with a definitive line in advance of the next meeting.	GW

10.2	MP Simon Clarke has resigned from his role in MHCLG and has been replaced by Luke Hall. RY queries if AH has or intends to write to Luke Hall to establish a connection.	AH
10.3	RY requests that DCC table the work they have done thus far at the meeting on 22 nd September 2020.	GW
10.4	JR requests clarity on whether the Board intend to submit a £25m or £50m funding application. To go for the £50m, the TIP must demonstrate ability to reach regional and national agendas. GC expresses concern as to whether Bishop Auckland has a strong national agenda and advises that the Board make its decision in line with the project list once this is established.	
10.5	GC confirms that as far as he is aware, Stevenage is the only town applying for £50m at the moment.	
10.6	JR comments that the Spanish Gallery and joint venture with Durham University in the Zurbaran Centre, will present Bishop Auckland as one of the best places in Europe to come and explore Spanish heritage for students and tourists. GC notes that the educational offer is significant.	
10.7	RY notes that Kynren also attracts a national and international audience. This data and feedback from the visitors can be used as evidence.	
10.8	DL comments that the attractions and plans for Bishop Auckland also have potential to make it a worthy stop for anyone visiting the North East region on a domestic holiday.	
10.9	JA concurs that there is real opportunity to build Bishop Auckland as an exemplar sustainable tourist destination. It has unique status from a destination point of view.	
10.10	GC undertakes to review visitor number projection documents to see if the work by Vision XS could be updated and extended to pull out a visitor penetration analysis on a national and international level.	GC
10.11	RY notes that a proportion of the funding provided to write the STF bid could be utilised for this purpose.	
10.12	DL concludes that the Board is aiming to pitch at £50m.	
10.13	DL thanks Board members for a fruitful and thought-provoking discussion.	
11.0	Date of Next Meeting	
11.1	Next Board Meeting is Friday 9 th October 2020 at 12:30.	

	Meeting Closed.	
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